

Chapter 20.25 SPECIAL AND OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Part 20.25A Downtown

20.25A.110 Design Review criteria.

The Director of the Development Services Department will consider the extent to which a proposal complies with the following criteria whenever a decision using Design Review, Part 20.30F LUC, is required by this Part 20.25A. Additional design criteria from other sections of this Part 20.25A may also apply to specific projects.

- A. Site Design Criteria.
 - 1. Vehicular Circulation and Parking.
 - a. Provide efficient vehicular access to parking and service areas which is coordinated on a superblock basis.
 - b. Coordinate the location of vehicular and pedestrian mid-block connections, considering opportunities for mid-block crossings.
 - c. Provide for safe and pleasant movement within the Downtown for the pedestrian and bicyclist.
 - d. Maximize the separation of vehicular traffic from pedestrian areas by means of level changes, space and distance, or landscaping.
 - e. Incorporate retail shopping space at ground level into parking structures whenever practical and appropriate.
 - f. Minimize the location of parking adjacent to pedestrian connections.
 - g. Limit the number of driveway openings and the number of access lanes in each opening.
 - h. Where appropriate, fit garages into the topography and make use of garage roofs for public open space, recreation or landscaped areas.
 - i. Maximize the use of underground parking.
 - 2. Pedestrian Circulation and Amenities. See LUC 20.25A.060.
 - 3. Wind and Sun.
 - a. Ensure that the form and placement of buildings consider desirable year-round conditions of sun and shade in surrounding open spaces and public areas.
 - b. Design new buildings with wind conditions in mind so as to shelter pedestrians from undesirable winds, particularly on the ground, and in publicly accessible areas.
 - c. Consider how new buildings might incorporate outdoor spaces of calm, especially for winter, and places of suitable breeziness in summer at levels of pedestrian activity.
 - d. Consider wind and sun in design of landscaping: e.g., evergreen tree-planting as wind blocks, or deciduous trees on south and west sides of open spaces to maximize winter sun penetration.
 - 4. Open Space.

- a. Design and locate open spaces, such as plazas, squares and large landscaped areas, to work as part of a comprehensive system of spaces in the Downtown.
 - b. Design open spaces to provide for maximum use by a wide range of people.
 - c. In designing open spaces, especially plazas, consider the following:
 - i. Orientation. Orient to sunlight and provide good physical and visual access to the sidewalk, so that the space is perceived as an extension of the sidewalk.
 - ii. Dimensions. Design as adequate for seating, planting, etc., but not so large as to appear barren and uninviting.
 - iii. Seating. Provide comfortable height and depth, and appropriate arrangement.
 - iv. Pavement. Use nonglare, nonslip, and safe surface materials.
 - v. Trees and Planting. Consider provision for shade and sun. Use to create space and define human scale. Provide protection from wind.
 - vi. Amenities. Use pedestrian-scaled lighting, fountains, litter receptacles, bicycle racks, and sheltered waiting areas.
 - vii. Provision of Space for Attractions. Design to permit vendors, outdoor cafes, rotating art displays, or abutting retail activity.
 - viii. Physical Access. Ensure ready physical as well as visual access with special attention to elevational difference.
 - ix. Enclosure. Use landscaping or structure to provide a sense of enclosure.
5. Light and Glare.
 - a. Consider and mitigate light and glare impacts upon major public facilities, streets and major public open spaces.
 - b. Mitigating measures may include use of low-reflecting building materials, landscaping, tilting of reflective panels, reorientation of the building or the addition of screening devices such as louvered screens and marquees.
- B. Downtown Patterns and Context.
1. Natural Setting and Topography.
 - a. Make creative use of any existing topographic variations in site design and location of buildings, circulation patterns, parking area design and public spaces to enhance the setting and provide variety.
 - b. Make maximum use of views to mountains, Lake Washington and the Seattle skyline.
 - c. Seek high quality of design for all buildings constructed at prominent locations. These locations may include areas on ridge crests and hilltops, fronting and public open spaces, those closing a vista and those affording a silhouette against the sky.
 2. Landscape Design.
 - a. Make effective use of significant landscape features to complement and contrast with building forms. This includes massing of plant materials to constitute a recognizable visual unit which contrasts effectively with built forms.

- b. Encourage retention of significant existing vegetation, where it can be incorporated into efficient site design and maintained in a safe and healthful condition.

- c. Consider the location or relocation of traffic control boxes, power vaults, utility boxes and similar features in the design of the pedestrian areas to minimize the impact on the visual and physical quality of the pedestrian environment.

- 3. Views.

- a. Consider the negative impact of a building on views, both from existing buildings and future developable or redevelopable sites.

- b. Consider the availability of public views from public spaces such as streets, street intersections, parks, plazas and areas of pedestrian concentration.

- 4. Building Height and Bulk.

- a. Buildings near public open spaces should permit visual access and, where feasible, physical access to the public open space.

- b. Wherever practicable, buildings should be oriented to minimize the shadows they cast on publicly accessible open spaces.

- c. Encourage slender towers, particularly at upper levels.

- d. Discourage buildings of extreme rectangular shape which tend to be out of proportion for their floor area.

- e. Encourage spacing between towers to retain the feeling of an open, airy Downtown.

- f. For buildings outside the Core Design District, encourage building massing which minimizes visual impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

- g. Stepbacks required for diminished floorplate buildings, LUC 20.25A.020.A.2(22), should be oriented to the public street or streets adjacent to the building site to maximize the availability of light and air at the street level and to preserve view corridors. Where the site abuts more than one public street, preference for the orientation of the stepback should be given to the street intended to have the highest orientation to pedestrians as provided by LUC 20.25A.115, Design Guidelines: Building/Sidewalk Relationships.

- h. Encourage rooftop features, appropriate to the overall height and scale of the building, to modify an otherwise unmodulated profile.

- 5. Transitions. In transitions between districts in the Downtown and between properties, the lower portions of buildings should be designed to promote easy circulation, good relationships among open spaces, visual connection in scale, and maximum penetration of sunlight to the ground level.

- 6. Patterns of Activity.

- a. Maximize opportunities for vital, pedestrian-level activity in all areas of the Downtown.

- b. Provide space for a variety of appropriate activities accessible to the public at large in the Downtown, especially at ground level and at main pedestrian levels.

- c. Uses and activities that are nonpublic or nonpedestrian in nature should not be located adjacent to pedestrian areas.

- 7. Signage.

- a. Ensure that signage is an integral part of the architectural design.

b. Encourage signage which is scaled to the pedestrian and enhances the pedestrian environment.

c. Signage must comply with the applicable requirements of Chapter 22B.10 BCC, now or as hereafter amended. (Ord. 5717, 2-20-07, § 9; Ord. 5582, 2-7-05, §§ 13, 14, 15, 16; Ord. 5497, 11-7-03, § 6; Ord. 5050, 1-20-98, § 8; Ord. 4973, 3-3-97, § 114; Ord. 4816, 12-4-95, § 214; Ord. 4268, 7-1-91, § 10; Ord. 3530, 8-12-85, § 54; Ord. 3498, 5-27-85, § 63; Ord. 3262, 6-6-83, § 2)